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31 MAY 1963

The Director, National Reconnaissance Office (S)

SUBJECT: Operational Aspects of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) (S)

Reference: C/JCS memo to Sec Def, subject as above, dated 2 May 63 (file CM 542-63).

I have reviewed the above referenced memorandum and have reached the following conclusions.

a. I agree in principle with the organizational management recommended by the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, and concurred in by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

b. Final agreement on this organizational arrangement is contingent upon JCS/Director, NRO concurrence in the explicit additional duties to be performed by the JRC in this connection. Accordingly, I am transmitting as Attachment I the Terms of Reference for these additional JRC duties. I understand these Terms of Reference are acceptable to the parties concerned. I am also transmitting as Attachment II, for any further JCS comments, a delineation of proposed additional functions and responsibilities of the JRC, compatible with the Terms of Reference, which would also form the basis for modification of the JRC charter. I should like to be informed of final JCS/Director, NRO concurrence on these matters by June 10, 1963.

c. I agree with the specific recommendation of the Director, NRO, concurred in by the Chiefs, that NRO responsibility for aircraft overflights will shift to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in periods of tension. Such shifts of responsibility will be submitted to the Secretary of Defense for approval.

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NRO, JCS and OSD review(s) completed.

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d. I do not concur in the JCS proposal that R&D responsibilities for satellite reconnaissance systems to be used in central or limited war be assigned to the military Services. It is my present view that responsibility for reconnaissance satellite R&D and operation should remain as assigned in the National Reconnaissance Office, and that adequate mechanisms exist to promulgate the development of such systems for potential employment through National Reconnaissance Office channels.

e. I request that the JCS by June 24, 1963, inform the Director, National Reconnaissance Office of any established and approved R&D requirements for realistic employment of satellites for reconnaissance in central and limited wars which, in the opinion of the JCS, are yet to be fulfilled or would require different implementation.



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2 Attachments

- I - Terms of Reference
NRO/JCS Aircraft
- II - Proposed Additional
Duties of JRC

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TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
NRO/JCS AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS CENTER

1. Problem:

To define organizational arrangements, functions, responsibilities, work flow and coordination procedures, such that the mutual responsibilities of the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, and the JCS for management and performance of aircraft flight over denied areas for reconnaissance purposes can best be satisfied, considering situations of both cold war and militarily more active situations.

In what follows, the term NRO implicitly recognizes that the CIA functions and operations in support of the NRO are under the control of the Director, NRO, including the preparation and submission of plans for aircraft or other vehicle overflights, although such CIA functions are explicitly discussed in several places.

2. Terms of Reference:

a. The NRO/CIA OpCen and the JCS/JRC are currently performing denied area aircraft overflight operations.

b. NRO/CIA missions now, and increasingly in the future, will require commitment of resources and capabilities under JCS direction, specific or implicit.

c. The totality of missions under way or under active consideration (satellite overflight reconnaissance, peripheral aircraft, corridor or special mission aircraft, aircraft overflight, and overflight by special vehicles -- e.g., balloons, drones, etc.) and the level of hostilities or military action under way at any time (cold war, periods of tension with possible or explicit military action, or some form of actual war) require that precise arrangements be formulated to ensure that all planned or proposed missions are compatible, that necessary resources and

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capabilities be made available, and that a focal point for coordination of the entire array of missions exists to ensure that all necessary missions are performed with the greatest possible dispatch.

d. The Special Group will continue to review and authorize all peacetime peripheral and overflight reconnaissance operations and other sensitive reconnaissance operations which fall within the scope of this charter. Should any missions be contemplated which are not normally so reviewed, it will be the responsibility of the parties in this charter arrangement to ensure non-interference of missions, lacking specific instructions to the contrary.

e. Reconnaissance mission planning will be in response to requirements validated by appropriate authority (such authority includes Secretary of Defense, USIB, JCS, and may include in special instances, by concurrence, Unified and Specified Commands, DIA and NSA) or in response to special request of appropriate authority.

f. Specific and detailed planning for reconnaissance mission support and operations, which also specifies mission control, will generally be conducted according to the following "normal partitioning."

JCS -- Peripheral flights, corridor flights, special missions, aircraft overflight missions anywhere in times of active military hostilities (as defined by the Secretary of Defense or higher authority) using inventory military resources, and/or other missions specifically requested or approved by the Secretary of Defense, or Special Group, whether or not requiring third party arrangements.

NRO -- All reconnaissance overflights over denied areas and other specifically designated areas, in particular overflights during relatively normal times or requiring highly sensitive third party arrangements. The Director, NRO will assign responsibility for preparation of aircraft overflight plans, for mission support, and for execution of approved missions to the CIA when appropriate to the vehicle and mode of operation to be employed.

Contingency plans will be prepared by JCS and NRO as required by the authorities listed in paragraph e., above, and following normal partitioning unless otherwise instructed (see para g., below).

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g. This "normal partitioning" can be perturbed by the Secretary of Defense (with the concurrence of the DCI in matters requiring joint Secretary of Defense/DCI agreement) or other higher authority to accommodate new or special situations. In particular, the Secretary of Defense or other higher authority may request either JCS or NRO to prepare plans for special situations or operations, and may request a transfer of mission control.

h. A joint operational entity is necessary to ensure complete and comprehensive planning and coordination. This is obtained through an expanded JRC which concurrently serves the operational needs of the NRO and JCS.

i. In accordance with the normal mission partitioning of f., responsibility for preparation of final mission execute orders and release will be assumed by the JCS for missions under their control, and by the Director, NRO for all operations under his control, including both CIA and DOD aircraft missions.

j. Under the terms of this arrangement the JRC functions and responsibilities will be enlarged, and appropriate additional officers brought in, to handle additional NRO duties as prescribed later, while maintaining current JRC functions and responsibilities.

In the performance of these several duties the JRC will be used as a directly integrated organizational entity by both JCS and NRO, reporting directly to these groups. Because of his several responsibilities under this arrangement, the Chairman, JRC, will be selected by the JCS with the concurrence of the Director, NRO.

3. Staffing and Location

a. The Chairman of the JRC also will serve as Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff.

b. In his capacity as Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff, and in accordance with, and limited by, the instructions of the Director, NRO, the Chairman of the JRC will manage the NRO/Aircraft Operations Center (AOC), and supervise the NRO/Satellite Operations Center (SOC).

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c. The NRO/AOC may be augmented by personnel presently assigned to the CIA Operations Office and other appropriate organizations within DOD, by joint agreement.

d. The NRO/AOC will be physically located within the Pentagon, to provide for maximum use of communications and other facilities, and to afford maximum ease of contact with JRC, situation rooms, etc.

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PROPOSED
ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE JRC

Under the arrangement specified, the Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff, also will be Chief of the Joint Reconnaissance Center. He will use the JRC operations staff augmented as indicated to perform the following duties. The present charter of the JRC will be modified accordingly to reflect these additional duties pertaining to NRO and JCS responsibilities.

a. Additional Duties for NRO.

As directed by the Director, NRO, in accordance with policies established by him and unless specifically assigned otherwise:

(1) Assign and/or review overflight mission planning in response to validated USIB or other appropriate authority request, and evaluate and modify if necessary operational plans based on analysis of mission requirements, programming option desired, logistic, weather, lighting condition, and readiness factors, schedules for operation, and performance capabilities of collection devices.

(2) From these plans, and in conjunction with appropriate organizations/agencies, define specific mission peculiar support required, if any (e.g., stand-downs, diversions, rescue and emergency provisions, tracking, communications, recovery and logistics).

(3) Prepare, and issue, upon approval, appropriate execute commands and orders for final mission commitment and recovery to Unified and Specified Commands, military Services, and NRO/CIA.

(4) Present plan for approval of total mission to higher authority as required.

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the Director, NRO and other designated officials informed of mission progress, difficulties, and results.

(6) Prepare and review consolidated forecast of future NRO missions, and status of planning for these, for appropriate and designated governmental groups.

(7) Prepare and transmit to the JCS forecasts of missions and plans therefor, with sufficient lead-times for review.

(8) Prepare and transmit to the JCS requests for support as appropriate with sufficient lead-times for review.

(9) Analyze, evaluate, deliver to appropriate agencies for further intelligence exploitation, and disseminate, mission performance results, and degree of achievement of programmed objectives.

(10) Develop appropriate cover and unplanned abort arrangements in coordination with appropriate agencies.

(11) Perform special studies as assigned in areas of future requirements, additional programs, transfer of control of resources under various contingencies, etc., for review and approval.

(12) Provide a focal point for translation of DIA-USIB intelligence, mapping and geodesy collection requirements into mission specifications.

(13) Specify targets to be covered by satellite missions from among assigned target lists, prepared by USIB(COMOR), translating validated requirements into desired on-orbit target program options and, as required, make on-orbit selection of specific option based on knowledge of other considerations (e.g., weather, intelligence).

b. Additional Duties for JCS.

As directed by Chairman, JCS:

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(2) Define mission conflicts, if any, for decisions as to priority between Chairman, JCS and Director, NRO, or higher authority if necessary.

(3) Define, on basis of forecast NRO missions, potential impact on resources of Unified and Specified Commands, for such support, special activities, etc., as may be required, and make arrangements for provisions of those resources with such commands.

(4) Assure that JCS and NRO are fully and continually informed on status and readiness of this support.

(5) Inform Director, NRO of any JCS considerations which in their estimation may require, as a matter of priority or urgency, a deletion or modification of forecast NRO plans on the basis of other military, operational or policy factors, and prepare such modified plans with Director, NRO concurrence.

(6) Prepare for JCS (and at Director, NRO request, for NRO) a monthly summary report of past and forecast peripheral and overflight missions and achieved or planned results.

(7) Participate as a matter of course with NRO on planning and operation matters requiring coordinated actions or missions (e.g., joint peripheral and overflight missions, transmission of execute orders, etc.).